

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SOPN, IT, US, BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER COMMENTS ON U.S.
STATEMENT ON ITALIAN SITUATION

REF: STATE 8082

SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET REPLIED TO COMMUNIST
PARTY LEADER AND DEPUTY VAN GEYT'S REQUEST FOR COMMENT
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ON THE DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON THE ITALIAN SITUATION
IN PARLIAMENT ON JANUARY 19. THE FULL TEXT OF THE
QUESTION AND ANSWER, IN UNOFFICIAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION,
FOLLOWS. END SUMMARY.

1. VAN GEYT'S QUESTION: "LAST JANUARY 12, PRESIDENT
CARTER, THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, OFFICIALLY

TOOK POSITION AGAINST THE PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNISTS IN WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. HE FURTHER DECLARED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THESE COUNTRIES DIMINISH. IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT CANNOT BE ENTHUSIASTIC IN OBSERVING THIS POLITICAL EVOLUTION, BUT IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES (SERIOUS CRISIS IN ITALY, FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS IN FRANCE), TAKING SUCH AN OFFICIAL POSITION CONSTITUTES A DIRECT BLOW - BEYOND ITALY AND FRANCE - AGAINST THE DEMOCRATIC SOVEREIGNTY OF THE WESTERN EUROPEAN NATIONS, AND AN UNACCEPTABLE INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THESE COUNTRIES, WHICH IS FURTHERMORE, CONTRARY TO THE HELSINKI ACCORDS. THE EVENTUAL ARRIVAL TO POWER OF NEW MAJORITIES, NORMALLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED AND ENJOYING THE SUPPORT OF LARGE ELEMENTS OF THE POPULATION, IS IN THIS CASE PUBLICALLY CHALLENGED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTRY WHICH DOMINATES THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND WHICH HAS ASSUMED THE ROLE OF THE CHAMPION OF THE DEFENSE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND OF DEMOCRACY. THE MATTER IN THIS CASE IS THUS A SERIOUS ACT WHICH REQUIRES A CLEAR AND PLAIN REPLY BY THE GOVERNMENTS BELONGING TO THIS ALLIANCE, INCLUDING THAT OF BELGIUM. WOULD THE MINISTER LET THE CHAMBER AND PUBLIC OPINION KNOW THE ATTITUDE OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT ON THIS MATTER?"

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2. FOREIGN MINISTER SIMONET'S REPLY: "MAY I BE PERMITTED TO REASSURE THE HONORABLE MEMBER. IT IS NOT THE INTENTION OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT, NOR IS IT MINE, TO MAKE THE SLIGHTEST PUBLIC JUDGMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE POLITICAL LIFE IN A DEMOCRATIC COUNTRY. THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT THUS DOES NOT PLAN TO TAKE ANY POSITION ON THE PROBLEM RAISED BY THE HONORABLE MEMBER. IT TAKES NOTE OF THE OPINION VOICED BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ON ITS RELATIONS WITH ITALY SHOULD THE PCI ACHIEVE POWER. IT CONCERNS A WASHINGTON POSITION ON WHICH THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT DOES NOT INTEND TO MAKE A COMMENT. TO MOVE AWAY FROM THIS ATTITUDE OF STRICT ABSTENTION WOULD CONSTITUTE A FORM OF INTERFERENCE WHICH CORRESPONDS NEITHER TO BELGIAN TRADITION NOR TO ITS RESPONSIBILITIES IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. I WOULD SIMPLY CALL TO THE HONORABLE MEMBER'S ATTENTION THAT IF MR. CARTER PERMITTED HIMSELF TO DECLARE THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE DIMINISH IN ITALY, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT HE, HIMSELF VAN GEYT HAS EVER REFRAINED FROM DECLARING THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOCRACY AND OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM DIMINISH IN WESTERN EUROPE."

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